

Fall 2005

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NEWS

School Food Services

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Homeless Status and Benefit Eligibility: *The McKinney-Vento Act*

In the wake of the Hurricane Katrina disaster many schools may be experiencing an increase in the number of displaced families. The *McKinney-Vento Act*, a federal law, guarantees homeless children and youth an education equal to that which they would receive if not homeless. According to the *McKinney-Vento Act*, homeless children and youth include individuals who lack a fixed, regular, adequate, nighttime residence. The provision requires that each Local Education Agency (LEA) designate a homeless liaison or coordinator who is responsible for ensuring that children and youths experiencing homelessness enroll and succeed in school. Therefore, for free lunch eligibility purposes, a list of students who are deemed homeless must be obtained from the homeless liaison/coordinator in order to justify benefits.

In cases where a household from a designated disaster area or a family that is for other reasons considered homeless moves in with another household, the displaced individuals may be considered homeless and consequently are automatically eligible for free meals. The host family could provide a revised application, which can include those displaced household members as long as any income provided to the host family is also included on the application. If the host family meets the free and reduced priced eligibility criteria, the LEAs determining official should provide the host family with a temporary approval of appropriate benefits. The host household should be reevaluated every 45 days. For more information about Missouri's Homeless Children and Youth Program, visit the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Web site: www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/fedprog/discretionarygrants/homeless/index.html.



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MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

"Making a positive difference through education and service"

Verification of Approved Applications for Free or Reduced Price Meal Benefits for the 2005-2006 School Year

Section 105 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, Public Law 108-265, amends the verification provisions in section 9(b) (3) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. Effective July 1, 2005, new procedures are added to the requirement that LEAs verify the eligibility of children in a sample of approved free and reduced price school meal applications.

The following information is provided in an effort to assist LEAs in implementing the new requirements as stated in the law.

Verification Methods

Basic Sample Size Method

LEAs that had a *non-response rate of 20 percent or more* for school year 2004-2005 must use the Basic Sample Size method for the verification process. The sample size is determined by selecting 3 percent or 3000 (whichever number is less) of all approved applications. The basic sample must be drawn from error-prone applications (applications indicating *income within \$100 monthly or \$1200 annually* of the maximum amount allowed for a household of a specific size to receive free or reduced price meal benefits). If there are not enough error-prone applications to meet the required sample size, additional applications must be randomly selected from the remaining approved applications.

Alternate Sample Size Methods

Alternate Sample Size methods may be used by any LEA if the non-response rate for the preceding school year is less than 20 percent.

The alternate sample size methods set forth in the law for LEAs meeting the above criteria are the same options established in current regulations:

Alternate I (Random): 3 percent or 3000 (whichever number is less) of all approved applications selected at random; **or,**

Alternate II (Focused): 1 percent of all approved applications or 1000 (whichever number is less) with sample selected from error-prone applications; plus the lesser of .5 percent (half of 1 percent) or 500 applications approved based on categorical eligibility

(Food Stamp or Temporary Assistance). If there are not enough error-prone applications to comply with the required sample size options, LEAs must select the remainder to be verified from applications with monthly incomes closest to the eligibility guidelines.

Verification Process

- On October 1, count the approved applications for free and reduced price meals.
- Determine the previous year's non-response rate.
- Select the verification method to be used.
- Calculate the number of applications that must be verified.
- Select the applications for verification.
- Confirming official (refers to an individual other than the original determining official who must review all applications selected for verification for correct initial approval prior to conducting any other verification activity) confirms the accuracy of the original approval.
- Notify households of selection for verification and/or provide written contact to the local Food Stamp/Temporary Assistance office for confirmation of benefit eligibility for Food Stamp/Temporary Assistance families.
- Examine documents submitted by households and/or review results of the local Food Stamp/Temporary Assistance office contact.
- Notify households of continued benefits or changes in benefit level.
- Verification must be completed by November 15.
- Complete and submit the Free or Reduced Price Lunch Verification Summary Report to the State Agency by February 15.

Summary of Changes in the Law

1. Approved applications are to be counted October 1 to determine the number that must be verified.
2. A confirming official must review all applications selected for verification for correct initial approval prior to conducting any other verification activity.
3. Verification must be complete by November 15.
4. LEAs must provide households a means of asking questions about verification by telephone without the household incurring a charge for the call.
5. The LEA must make at least one attempt to obtain the necessary verification from households that fail to respond to the initial request for verification.

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- School officials verifying income eligibility for free and reduced price meals must allow households to provide documentation of income for any point in time between the month prior to application and the time the household is required to provide income documentation.**

If you have questions regarding verification please contact the State Agency at 573-751-3526.

Local Wellness Policy

Congress recognizes that schools play a critical role in promoting student health, preventing children from becoming overweight, and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity. To formalize and encourage this role, Congress passed a law (Public Law 108 - 265) requiring each school district participating in the National School Lunch and/or Breakfast Program to establish a local wellness policy by the beginning of School Year 2006-2007.

This legislation supports President George W. Bush's HealthierUS Initiative. This initiative helps Americans take steps to improve personal health and fitness and encourages all Americans, including children, to be physically active every day; eat a



nutritious diet; get preventive screenings; and make healthy choices. The legislation also places the responsibility of developing a wellness policy at the local level, so that the individual needs of each LEA can be addressed. According to the requirements for the Local Wellness Policy, LEAs must set goals for nutrition education, physical activity, all foods available on campus, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness. Additionally, LEAs are required to involve a broad group of individuals in policy development and to have a plan for measuring policy implementation.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Health and Senior Services, and the Missouri School Board's Association in conjunction with the University of Missouri Extension, the Missouri School Nutrition Association (formerly the Missouri School Food Service Association), LEAs, the Dairy Council and the American Heart Association are in the process of drafting a sample model Local Wellness Policy in order to provide schools with a solid example of a comprehensive policy. These materials are intended for guidance and reference; local policies are not limited to the examples listed in the model policy.

The date for release of this model policy has not yet been established, but LEAs should continue to log on to the DESE School Food Services Section Web site to obtain this policy upon its completion.

Reauthorization Update and Reminder

Free and Reduced Price Eligibility

Free and reduced price meal applications will be valid for one year. Households are no longer required to report changes in circumstances such as a decrease in household size, an increase in income or when no longer certified eligible for Food Stamps or Temporary Assistance benefits. A change in eligibility can occur as a result of verification.

2004-2005 Coordinated Review Effort (CRE) Results

During the 2004-2005 school year, the School Food Services Section conducted 144 CRE reviews. Twelve LEAs did not meet Performance Standard 1, which evaluates student eligibility determinations and meal counting and claiming procedures for accuracy. One LEA did not meet Performance Standard 2, which evaluates meals on the day of review for meal component completeness. Please take extra care when determining student eligibility, meal counting and claiming, and monitoring meals for required components to ensure that the LEA is providing the State Agency with an accurate count of reimbursable free, reduced price and paid meals served.

The 2005-2006 school year marks the third year of the CRE cycle which runs a series of five years. All participating LEAs in Missouri will be reviewed within the five-year period.

Missouri Entries Receive USDA's 2005 Best Practices Awards

Every year USDA has Regional Best Practices Awards. Missouri entries are forwarded to the USDA, Mountain Plains Regional office in Denver, Co. The entries from Missouri competed with 9 other states that comprise the Mountain Plains Region. There were four categories with one winner for each. The awards and recognition from USDA go to the following Missouri recipients:



- **Pat Brooks, Columbia Public Schools, Columbia Mo.**, was awarded the 2005 Regional Best Practices Award in the category of Increasing the Consumption of Fruits/Vegetables and/or Whole Grains by Participants. Columbia Public Schools hosted three major events promoting new and different foods for students to try. This tremendous effort lends itself to improving student food selections by allowing them to make educated decisions about the foods they eat.

- **Leah Schmidt, Hickman Mills C-1, Kansas City, Mo.**, was awarded the 2005 Regional Best Practices Award in the category of Increasing School Breakfast Program Access. Hickman Mills food service collaborated with the Santa Fe Accelerated Elementary school nurse to write a classroom enrichment grant to enable all students a free breakfast in grades K-5. Students were dismissed from the buses and reported directly to their classrooms for a delivered breakfast. Student participation increased to 87% from 41% the previous year. Research has shown that children who eat breakfast perform better in areas such as standardized testing, reduced visits to the nurse's office and improved grades.

Congratulations to all recipients and nominees in the various categories of the Best Practices Awards.

National School Lunch Week October 10-14, 2005



"School Lunch, It's Instrumental," in keeping a child's mind and body going for the remainder of the day. "It's Instrumental" is this year's theme for National

School Lunch Week. Serving a well-balanced lunch to children means more than the food itself. It is part of a child's education and can be a cornerstone to learning other subjects in school. Invite your students and community to share in National School Lunch Week. Trumpet to your community and serenade your students on the importance of school lunch October 10-14, 2005.

"Go Places with Breakfast" is the theme for National School Breakfast Week, March 6-10, 2006. To learn more, visit www.schoolnutrition.org/nslw/.

Food Safety Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Point (HACCP) Principles

Section 111 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 requires LEAs to implement a food safety program for the preparation and service of school meals served to children in the school year beginning July 1, 2005. The program must be based on HACCP principles and conforms to guidance issued by USDA. This date has been extended to require schools to have full implementation of the food safety program that complies with HACCP principles no later than the end of 2005-2006 school year. We encourage LEAs to start working on their food safety program as soon as possible. For more information about what elements are required, visit www.dese.mo.gov/divadm/food/PDF/HACCP_Guidance.pdf.

Foodservice professionals are a vital link to children. The food you provide helps them be ready to learn. The choices you offer can help them build healthy lifestyles.

— Team Nutrition, USDA

Action for Healthy Kids After-School Snack Program Curriculum Pilot

Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) is a national initiative to address the epidemic of childhood overweight and adult obesity in the United States. Missouri's AFHK (MO AFHK) has piloted with several Missouri schools to implement Recharge! and Whiz, Zip, Zap It! as after-school snack programs.

Whiz, Zip, and Zap It! curriculum involves nutrition education paired with hands on healthy, quick-to-fix, inexpensive snack preparation and exposure to a variety of nutritious foods. Students, ages 8-12, are able to transfer the skills learned in the after-school snack program to the home setting by receiving a full color, pictorial cookbook to share with the family. By teaching children about the importance of good nutrition and assisting them to develop the skills to make their own healthy meals and snacks, children are empowered to make wise food choices which will reduce the incidence and risk of obesity, heart disease and other chronic diseases. For more information, visit www.Nutra-Net.org.



Recharge! is a fun-for-kids after-school program designed for students in grades 3 to 6 to learn about and practice good nutrition and physical activity habits. ReCharge! is brought to you by Action for Healthy Kids and the National Football League, two organizations committed to the long-term health and wellness of our nation's children.



ReCharge! focuses on four core concepts: Energy In (nutrition), Energy Out (physical activity), Teamwork and Goal-Setting. ReCharge! reinforces these valuable life skills, which are essential not only to students' physical and mental health and wellness, but also to their academic performance and self-esteem. ReCharge! gets kids up and moving while they learn about eating healthy, staying active, setting goals and working as a team to reach them.

ReCharge! was developed by after-school experts with guidance from a panel of 25 leading education, fitness, nutrition and after-school organizations and promotes national standards for health education, physical activity and parent involvement and the 2005 USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans. For more information about Recharge!, visit: www.actionforhealthykids.org/special_after.php.

Revenue and Expenditure Report for School Food Services Programs

Your revenue and expenditure report is a great management tool that offers: participation data; per meal costs for lunch and breakfast; per meal cost for food, labor and other costs, and statewide average data.

Helpful Information

- Always break out program revenue and nonprogram revenue.
- Negative Closing Balances can be taken to zero by using the Adjustment to Balance field – Part 1, Line 4.
- Indirect costs that the LEA may recover for the current year should not exceed the amount on Part 1, Line 11.
- Public and nonpublic LEAs Closing Balance should equal their program balance. Nonpublic LEAs Closing Balance should equal their ledger and/or checkbook balance.
- Employee Benefits equal to zero is not likely; every employee would have contributions for Social Security.
- For the 2004-2005 school year, Part 4 – Severe Need Breakfast Overpayment – is no longer monitored. Reauthorization changed that regulation. LEAs do not have to justify a breakfast overpayment.

If you have questions, contact Donna Maddox at 573-751-4402.

School Food Service Calendar

July

- 1
 - Regular Term Application/Agreement available on Web for renewal
 - Revenue and Expenditure Report available on Web for 2004-2005 school year (non-public schools)
- 15
 - June Regular and Summer Term Claim due
 - Commodity Open Order deadline, noon (August delivery)
 - Value of Commodity Food Report mailed to Schools
 - Direct Certification Material available on Web
 - Perform and document Monthly Edit Check on daily meal counts

August

- 15
 - July Regular & Summer Claim due
 - Annual Secretary of the Board Report deadline (public schools only)
 - Commodity Open Order deadline, noon (September delivery)
 - Perform and document Monthly Edit Check on daily meal counts

September

- 1
 - Update Methods of Collection and Meal Counting Form (if necessary)
 - August Regular and Summer Term Claim due
 - Commodity Open Order deadline, noon (October delivery)
 - Perform and document Monthly Edit Check on daily meal counts
 - Revenue and Expenditure Report available on Web for 2004-2005 school year (public schools)

October

- 1
 - Count approved applications for verification
- 15
 - September Regular Term Claim due
 - Application Agreement Renewal deadline
 - Commodity Open Order deadline, noon (November delivery)
 - Perform and document Monthly Edit Check on daily meal counts

November

- 15
 - October Regular Term Claim due
 - Commodity Open Order deadline, noon (December delivery)
 - Perform and document Monthly Edit Check on daily meal counts
 - Verification process must be completed

Monthly Processed Commodity items include salad dressing, margarine, eggs, cheese, and dry milk. The deadline date for ordering processed commodities can be found at the bottom of each open order form.

December

- 15
 - November Regular Claim due
 - Commodity Open Order deadline, noon (January delivery)
 - Perform and document Monthly Edit Check on daily meal counts

January

- 15
 - December Regular Term Claim due
 - Commodity Inventory Report deadline (Food Management schools only)
 - Verification Summary due
 - Commodity Open Order deadline, noon (February delivery)
- 31
 - On-site reviews completed prior to February 1
 - Perform and document Monthly Edit Check on daily meal counts

February

- 15
 - Commodity Open Order deadline, noon (March delivery)
 - January Regular Term Claim due
 - Perform and document Monthly Edit Check on daily meal counts
 - Free or Reduced Price Lunch Verification Summary Report must be submitted to the State Agency

March

- 15
 - February Regular Term Claim due
 - Commodity Open Order deadline, noon (April delivery, last delivery for the school year)
 - Perform and document Monthly Edit Check on daily meal counts

April

- 15
 - March Regular Term Claim due
 - Renewal of Summer Term Application Agreement available
 - Perform and document Monthly Edit Check on daily meal counts

May

- 1
 - Free and Reduced Price Meal Benefit Form and Direct Certification booklet online
- 15
 - April Regular Term Claim due
 - Perform and document Monthly Edit Check on daily meal counts

June

- 15
 - May Regular and Summer Term Claim due
 - Perform and document Monthly Edit Check on daily meal count